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A
SHEAF OF VERSE

BOUND FOR
THE FAIR.

BY
HENRY THEODORE TUCKERMAN.



NEW YORK:
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1864.

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A SHEAF OF VERSE.

ITALY.

With what enchantment glow
The mountain peaks of snow,
And the blue waters of that Southern sea
Whose dallying arms inclose
The beauty and the woes
That lure our restless hearts to Italy !

The mystery of Time,
With interlude sublime,
Steals through the murmur of the passing day ;
Memorials of the Past
A pensive challenge cast,
And from familiar bounds win thought away ;

While Music's pulses beat
To guide the willing feet
Where gifted spirits limitless aspire ;
And all the muses wait
Our life to consecrate,
And bid the soul expand with vast desire ;

RAPHAEL's angelic child,
SALVATOR's forest wild,
The sunset's golden mist CLAUDE's pencil caught ;
Brave MICHAEL's forms sublime,
That adamantine rhyme
The Tuscan bard from love and sorrow wrought ;

PETRARCH's love-rounded lays,
And TASSO's tear-gemmed bays,
The marble wonder of Rome's saintly pile ;
BELLINI's plaintive strain,
MARENGO's storied grain,
Kindle the fancy and the heart beguile.

Nor less does Nature woo,
With ravishment imbue
The elemental grace her aspect fills ;
What azure seems to brood
Above, in tender mood,
While glimmering sunshine laughs upon the hills !

The sky, at evening, glows
With amber, pearl, and rose,
As if to pave with gems a seraph's walk ;
Twilight's soft breath endears,
And melts in grateful tears
On the flax blossom and the aloe's stalk ;

Vineyards serenely crest
The hoar volcano's breast,
And orbs of flame through darksome foliage gleam ;

Umbrageous Apennine,
And lakes of crystalline
Invoke the limner's touch, the poet's dream.

The chestnut plumes uplift,
And violet odors drift,
As winds from vale to upland gently pass,
The cypress shafts to sway,
Sigh through the olives gray,
And almond flowers scatter on the grass.

Yet soon our rapture flies,
The sweet illusion dies
When human scenes call back the pilgrim's glance ;
And the degraded land
Beneath oppression's brand
Reproachful mocks his visionary trance.

The glory of the Past
A shadow seems to cast
And living charms allegiance to defy :
No beauty can elate,
No genius consecrate
The air whose echoes waft the captive's sigh.

Through Freedom's long eclipse
Mute are inspired lips,
And life a tortured vigil to the brave ;
For they who do and dare,
The patriot's fate must share—
Scaffold and rack, the dungeon and the grave !

“She is not dead, but sleeps,
Though slow the life-blood creeps
Through veins benumbed with anguish, not despair ;
Invaders yet shall fly,
The despot and the spy,
And brutal priestcraft tremble in its lair !”

Thus have thy lovers cried
When skeptics, in their pride,
Would own no promise in the baffled zeal
That pined in Spielberg’s gloom
And braved the martyr’s doom,
Or patient bore the pangs thy exiles feel.

And now a King benign,
By Love’s own right divine,
His father’s fallen sceptre takes with awe ;
And wields it to obey
The humanizing sway
That dedicates a race to Liberty and Law ;

With him a Statesman wise,
Whose liberal mind defies
The narrow feuds that severed states control ;
And strives, from mount to sea,
Inviolat and free,
To wake and harmonize a nation’s soul !

And when the arms of Gaul
Unloosed the Austrian thrall,
And Victor’s banner cheered the Lombard plain ;

It floated wide and free
 Along the Tuscan sea,
 And bade Val d'Arno's lilies bloom again !

Then to the Patriot King
 * CASTRUCCIO's sword they bring,
 And Faction's ancient trophies all divide :
 And throngs, with festal rite,
 Seek the far mountain height,
 To chant FERUCCIO's glory where he died.

Another champion now
 Lifts his unsullied brow,
 Whose wisdom chastens the intrepid eyes ;
 And with fraternal mien,
 And confidence serene,
 And dauntless valor, tyranny defies !

His firm Ligurian mould,
 Warm, trustful, frank, and bold,
 With years of peace and peril on the deep ;

* On the occasion of VICTOR EMMANUEL's visit to Tuscany, at the Villa Puccini, in Pistoja, NICCOLO PUCCINI, the hereditary representative of the family, and a brave and liberal cavalier, presented to the "First Soldier of Italian Independence," the celebrated sword of CASTRUCCIO CASTRACANI, long reserved by its owner for such a disposition. At about the same time, a deputation of Genoese restored, with great ceremony, to Pisa, the chains of her Gate, which the once great maritime republic had borne off as a trophy, during the mediæval wars, from her hated rival. In the autumn of 1848, after the successful revolution in Tuscany, a festival was given at Cavinana, a little town nestled among the Apennines, in memory of FERUCCIO, on the very spot where, tradition says, he perished for his country, three centuries ago.

Nerved arm and chartered brain,
Battle and faith to gain,
And from their thrones the recreant princes sweep.

And when his prowess found
At home no vantage-ground,
He sought afar the struggling free to aid ;
And trained his legions there,
To wait, achieve, and bear,
Until the signal came for Italy's crusade.

Then like a star he rose,
Portentous to her foes,
Whose rallying beams electric courage spread ;
And when Novara's day
Had ended in dismay,
In triumph unto Rome the patriots led.

Oft from her ancient gate,
Oblivious of fate,
His eager cohorts, when the bugles call,
Rush on the cannon flame,
And victory proclaim,
As, at their bayonets' gleam, the gunners fall !

When triple hosts surround
That liberated ground,
And Freedom's hopes in wanton treachery fade :
With what heroic pride,
His loved one at his side,
Rides forth the Chief unconquered though betrayed !

Hunted, proscribed, bereft,
With naught but Honor left,
A wanderer—noble in his lowly toil;
He watched with passive might,
Prompt to renew the fight,
And lead the van upon his native soil.

Down from their rocky scalps,
His hunters of the Alps
Rush, like a torrent, at the onset's peal;
And Como's *sbirri* run,
Varese's day is won,
Imperial squadrons fly their charging steel!

Lo! on a summer day,
Around Marsala's bay,
Uprose his war-cry through the welkin clear;
Sicilia's outraged isle
Is kindled by his smile,
And rallies to the strife with GARIBALDI near!

How shrunk the craven horde,
As flashed his waving sword,
And onward with his gallant band he sped!
Women their jewels flung,
Children around him clung,
But royal myrmidons in terror fled!

From vine and cactus hedge,
From orange-grove and sedge,
The dews of May exhaled their fragrant breath;

Old Etna smoke-wreaths cast
Upon the rising blast,
That heralded her sons to liberty or death !

Palermo's golden shell
Echoed her tyrant's knell,
In the freed captive's shout, the people's cheer ;
And saw her champion kneel,
Upon his cheek to feel
A dying comrade's sacrificial tear !

Across the Faro's tide
His braves at midnight glide,
And Freedom's watch-fires light Calabria's shore :
Swift his victorious way,
Salerno ends the fray,
Parthenope is reached—the struggle o'er.

For Liberty's pure flame,
Shrined in a crystal name,
Such peaceful triumphs to his country brings ;
Wins love that discords heal,
From brother's steadfast zeal,
And fleets and armies from apostate kings.

His deeds afresh shall crown
Vulturno with renown,
Where stood the despot's hirelings at bay ;
And fiercely braved his might,
In long and valiant fight,
Where HANNIBAL of yore led War's array.

No retinue attends,
Nor pomp allurements lends,
The patriot's mission and the victor's palm ;
But the resistless grace
Of manhood's pristine race,
Benignant, simple, valorous, and calm !

And Roman hearts now burn,
To hail thy blest return,
Before whose face the cruel bigots flee ;
While with unfaltering mien,
The Adriatic Queen
Uplifts her fettered hands to God and thee !

Free be the land whose breast
Doth welcome every guest,
Who, worn and weary with insensate strife,
Seeks the maternal fold
Humanity of old,
The garner made for our propitious life !

1860.

THE INDIAN SUMMER.

CLASPED with a misty zone,
Autumn her harvest robe serenely weaves ;
Now burns the sumach's cone,
And gleams the amber maize between the sheaves.

In orchards gnarled by gales,
How through the umbrage crimson apples glow,
And clear the plaintive quails
Pipe the rude urchins from their nests below !

The creeper wide unfurls
Its scarlet banners as the zephyrs pass ;
Snowberries strew their pearls,
And starry asters fleck the tangled grass.

The dogwoods purple bear,
The hickories topaz in the sunset fire,
And oaks brown mantles wear,
While maples light between a sylvan pyre.

Amid the swampy mould,
And on the mountain-ash what rubies shine ;
And, like a vase of gold,
The yellow gourd hangs on the withered vine.

Blithely cicadas spring
Along our path, and loud the marsh frogs croak,
And on insatiate wing
The jetty crows poise o'er the stubble-smoke.

Immortelles incense breathe
From the low meadows ; in the hush of noon
The chestnut's prickly sheath
Clinks down upon the turf its glossy boon.

In flickering beams how glint
The amethystine grape and emerald pine,
And ocean's cold, gray tint
Transmuted now to azure crystalline !

Lilies their speckled urns,
And balmy firs their drooping needles, lift ;
Their sculptured edge the ferns ;
While slowly by the thistle-feathers drift.

The columbines scarce nod
Upon their slender stems and rocky ledge,
Nor waves the golden rod,
Nor hums the dragon-fly around the sedge.

A mellow calmness lies,
As if fruition solemnized the air,
On woodland, field, and skies—
The smile of Nature at her answered prayer.

CHESTER.

How charmed we pilgrims from the eager West,
Where only life, and not its scene, is old,
Beside the hearth of Chester's inn at rest,
Her ancient story to each other told!

The holly-wreath and dial's moon-orbed face,
The Gothic tankard, crown'd with beaded ale,
The faded aquatint of Chevy Chace,
And heir-loom Bible, harmonized the tale.

Then roamed we forth as in a wondrous dream,
Whose visions truth could only half eclipse :
The turret shadows living phantoms seem,
And mill-sluiice brawl the moan of ghostly lips.

Night and her planet their enchantment wove,
To wake the brooding spirits of the past ;
A Druid's sickle glistened in the grove,
And Harold's war-cry died upon the blast.

The floating mist that hung on Brewer's hill
(While every heart-beat seemed a sentry's tramp).
In tented domes and bannered folds grew still,
As rose the psalm from Cromwell's wary camp.

From ivied tower, above the meadows sere,
We watched the fray with hunted Charles of yore.
When grappled Puritan and cavalier,
And sunk a traitor's throne on Rowton moor.

We tracked the ramparts in the lunar gloom,
 Knelt by the peasants at St. Mary's shrine ;
With his own hermit mused at Parnell's tomb,
 And breathed the cadence of his pensive line.

Beneath a gable, mouldering and low,
 The pious record we could still descry,
Which, in the pestilence of old De Foe,
 Proclaimed that here death's angel flitted by.

At morn the venders in the minster's shade,
 With gleaming scales and plumage at their feet,
Seemed figures on the canvas of Ostade,
 Where mart and temple so benignly meet.

Of Holland whispered then the sullen barge ;
 We thought of Venice by the hushed canal,
And hailed each relic on time's voiceless marge—
 Sepulchral lamp and clouded lachrymal.

The quaint arcades of traffic's feudal range,
 And giant fossils of a lustier crew ;
The diamond casements and the moated grange,
 Tradition's lapsing fantasies renew.

The oaken effigies of buried earls,
 A window blazoned with armorial crest,
A rusted helm, and standard's brodered furls,
 Chivalric eras patiently attest.

Here William's castle frowns upon the tide ;
 There holy Werburgh keeps aerial sway,
To warn the minions who complacent glide,
 And swell ambition's retinue to-day.

Once more we sought the parapet, to gaze,
And mark the hoar-frost glint along the dales,
Or, through the wind-cleft vistas of the haze,
Welcome afar the mountain-ridge of Wales.

Ah, what a respite from the onward surge
Of life, where all is turbulent and free,
To pause awhile upon the quiet verge
Of olden memories, beside the Dee !

EGERIA.

Nor yet, not yet, can I for thee
Awake a moving strain,
To weave the minstrel's careless rhyme
Would be a task of pain ;
And thou hast never felt the wants
That press upon the soul,
When deeper moods with tender awe
Its buoyancy control ;
Hope's gladsome visions to thy mind
The world in light array,
And only hues of brilliancy
Around thy fancy play :
But when the fount within thy breast,
Now sealed in deep repose,
Shall gush to life and melt thy heart
With music as it flows ;
When from the lightsome word you turn,
And, gazing through a tear,

Look earnestly for kindred thoughts
And sympathy sincere ;
When Admiration can no more
From Love thy bosom wean,
And with a holy joy thy heart
Upon true faith would lean ;
When sorrow comes across thy path
Its brooding shade to throw,
And fires long pent in darkness up
Send forth a vital glow ;
When, shrinking from the light away,
Expanded feeling's tide
Shall to the channel of the soul
Like hidden waters glide ;
When for responsive glances look
The eyes that now delight
Only to trace the countless signs
Of Beauty's gentle might ;
When smiles upon thy lip shall play,
Because thy life is blest
With a noble heart's devotedness,
And a cherished love's behest ;
When Duty seems a rule of bliss,
And Home a spell of joy—
The precious gold whose wealth redeems
The world's most base alloy ;
And all the pageants Fame can boast,
Or Fortune e'er bestow,
Grow dim before the higher good
Which it is thine to know ;
When on thee dawns a sense of all

Exalted Truth can bring,
And in her atmosphere serene
Thy spirit folds its wing;
When hallowed grows thy constant thought
Before affection's shrine,
And all thy winning graces wear
Its tenderness divine,—
Then, dearest, bid me strike my harp,
And, scorning tricks of art,
I'll breathe a strain whose tone may wake
An echo in thy heart!

HOFER.

“ At the place of execution he said ‘ he stood before Him who created him ; and standing he would yield up his spirit to Him.’ A coin which had been issued during his administration, he delivered to the corporal, with the charge to bear witness, that in his last hour, he felt himself bound by every tie of constancy to his poor father-land. Then he cried, ‘ Fire ! ’ ”

I WILL not kneel to yield my life ;
Behold me firmly stand,
As oft I've stood in deadly strife
For my dear father-land ;
The cause for which I long have bled,
I cherish to the last ;
God's blessing be upon it shed
When my vain life is past !

On Nature's ramparts I was born,
And o'er them walked elate,
My retinue the hues of dawn,
The mists my robe of state ;
I will not shame my mountain birth,
Slaves only crouch to die,
Erect I'll take my leave of earth,
With clear and dauntless eye.

Thoughts of the eagle's lofty home,
Of stars that ever shine,
The torrent's crested arch of foam,
The darkly waving pine,
The dizzy crag, eternal snow,
Echoes that wildly roll—
With valor make my bosom glow,
And wing my parting soul.

This coin will wake my country's tears,
Fresh cast in Freedom's mould,
And dearer to my brave compeers
Than all your despot's gold ;
O, let it bear the last farewell
Of one free mountaineer,
And bid the Tyrol peasants swell
Their songs of martial cheer !

I've met ye on a fairer field,
And seen ye tamely bow ;
Think not with suppliant knee I'll yield
To craven vengeance now ;

Cut short my few and toilsome days,
Set loose a tyrant's thrall,
I'll die with unaverted gaze,
And conquer as I fall.

Above the sense of human woes,
Loyal to native land,
Unconscious of these eager foes,
Creator, see me stand!
Free as when first I drew my breath,
Though girt with mortal ire;
My country, take a patriot's death,
My God, his spirit,—“Fire!”

TO A LAKE.

AROUND thee mountains forest-crowned and green
Majestic rise,
Above, like love's triumphal arch, are seen
The quiet skies.

How sweet to watch the sunset o'er thee weave
Celestial hues,
And mark the rosy glow of morn and eve
Thy face suffuse.

How spread thy waters like a crystal sea
When breezes die,
And in their lucent depths cloud, hill, and tree,
Reflected lie.

How loves the moon a silver path to trace
 Athwart thy breast,
Or see repose in thy pellucid vase
 Her virgin crest.

Then ripples play and drooping leaves awake
 Her light to greet,
While their soft murmurs on the silence break
 Like fairy feet.

And from the shade of some o'er-hanging cliff,
 Or islet green,
Starts forth with gentle plash the lover's skiff,
 To bless the scene.

Rare flowers hang their bright and fragrant urns
 Around thy brink,
And the glad deer from leafy covert turns
 Thy wave to drink.

The wild-birds woo thee as they coyly sweep
 With downward flight,
Or cradled on thy bosom sink to sleep,
 In mute delight.

Would'st thou know peace that lore can ne'er reveal?
 Bend o'er the tide,
And to thy heart its tranquil clearness feel
 Serenely glide.

SYRACUSE.

ALL day my mule with patient tread
Had moved along the plain,
Now o'er the lava's ashen bed,
Now through the sprouting grain ;
Across the torrent's rocky lair,
Beneath the aloe-hedge,
Where yellow broom makes sweet the air,
And waves the purple sedge.

Lone were the hills, save where supine
The dozing goatherd lay,
Or, at a rude and broken shrine,
The peasant knelt to pray ;
Or where athwart the distant blue
Thin saffron clouds ascend,
As Carbonari, hid from view,
Their smouldering embers tend.

Luxuriant vale or sterile reach,
A mountain temple-crowned,
Or inland curve of glistening beach,
The changeful scene surround ;
While scarlet poppies burning near,
And citrons' emerald gleam,
Make barren intervals appear
Dim lapses of a dream.

How meekly o'er the meadows gay
The azure flax-blooms spread ;
What fragrance on the breeze of May
The almond-blossoms shed ;
Wide-branching fig-trees deck the fields,
Or round the quarries cling,
And cactus-stalks, with thorny shields,
In wild contortions spring.

Here groves of cork dusk shadows throw,
There vine-leaves lightsome sway,
While chestnut-plumes serenely glow
Above the olives gray ;
Tall pines upon the sloping meads
Their sylvan domes uprear,
And rankly the papyrus reeds
Low cluster in the mere.

And Syracuse with pensive mien,
In solitary pride,
Like an untamed but throneless queen,
Crouched by the lucent tide ;
With honeyed thyme still Hybla teemed,
Its scent each zephyr bore,
And Arethusa's fountain gleamed
Translucent as of yore.

Methought, upstarting from his bath,
Old Archimedes cried,
"Eureka!" in my silent path,
Whose echoes long replied ;

That Pythias, in the sunset glow,
Rushed by to Damon's arms,
While from the Tyrant's cave below
Moaned impotent alarms.

And where upon a sculptured stone,
The ruined arch beside,
A hoary, bronzed, and wrinkled crone
The twirling distaff plied,—
Love with exalted Reason fraught
In Plato's accents came,
And Truth by Paul sublimely taught
Relumed her virgin flame.

The ancient sepulchres that rose
Along the voiceless street,
Time's myriad vistas seemed to close
And bid life's waves retreat ;
As if intrusive footsteps stole
Beyond their mortal sphere,
And felt the awed and eager soul
Immortal comrades near.

The moss-grown ramparts loom in sight
Like warders of the deep,
Where, flushed with evening's amber light,
The havened waters sleep ;
Unfurrowed by a Roman keel
Or Carthaginian oar,
The speared and burnished galleys now
Their slumber break no more.

But when the distant convent-bell,
Ere Day's last smiles depart,
With mellow cadence pleading fell
Upon my brooding heart ;
And Memory's phantoms thick and fast
Their fond illusions bred,
From peerless spirits of the past,
And wrecks of ages fled,—

Joy broke the spell ; an emblem blest
That lonely harbor cheered,
As if to greet her pilgrim guest,
My country's flag appeared !
Its radiant folds auroral streamed
Amid that haunted air,
And every star prophetic beamed
With Freedom's triumph there !

BETTER MOMENTS.

With what a calm and hopeful grace come forth
The starry emblems of supernal love
Into the dusky sky ! So have our years
Been shorn of darkness by the light divine
From Time's dim firmament benignly shed
By the same hand that led us forth at first
To tread Life's solemn shore ; upon that strand
Surges of grief, with melancholy roar,
Will sometimes beat ; but only to subside

Into a pensive murmur, soothing oft
Our troubled breasts with dreams of holier spheres,
Where, like a peaceful lake, whose crystal depths
E'er image lovely things, the heart expands,
Tranquil and bright beneath the smile of God.
Now that the last breeze of another year
Thus sighs itself away, awake my soul !
And garner up the pleasant memories
That smile upon thee from departed days ;
Ere these redeemers of the Past grow dim,
Throw on its tomb a wreath : Remember now
How oft night's beauteous queen has solaced thee,
When, on the ocean waste, her beams have spread
A silver pathway for the barque of Hope
To float serenely into coming time !
How did thy baser passions melt away
In those soft, tranquil nights ! What calm divine
Through all thy powers in subtle beauty spread,
What solemn raptures stirred thy silent depths,
What visions of the beautiful arose !
What passionate resolves to follow truth,
Obey the inward law ; with boundless love,
Firm trust, and conscious joy, to take thy way
Through the mysterious destinies of earth,
Free and untroubled as a happy child !

Recall the ravishments of music born,
Warm with emotions tender and profound,
When on a sea of melody thou lay,
Swept with a thrilling freedom, or upborne,
Oblivious of time, as some high strain

Imparadised thee with its melting spell,
And rendered consciousness intense and sweet.
Conjure from by-gone hours the sacred thoughts
That came to thee at twilight, as the west
Mantled the aged hills with pearly light,
And sent bright scintillations up the sky,
Like paths of amber, amethystine waves,
Or roseate streams through azure meadows rolled,
Emblazoned with a solar heraldry,—
Commingle all within the purple mists,
Which, like the floating robes of seraphs, play
Round the departing sun !

Renew once more
The charm that lured thee, as thou loitered far
Into the mazes of that verdant lore,
That, like a primal forest of the east,
Spreads its o'erladen branches many a league,
While flowers of every hue beneath are strewn,
Sending forever through the solemn air
Incense the breath of ages cannot waste !
What though the world is cold, so thou canst steal
From its stern throng, and in the orange-groves
Of fair Verona, in the moonlight, hear
Juliet's deep vows, fresh from her virgin soul,
Stir the awed night-breeze, like the mystic tones
Of spherulic music from some new-born star ?
Or stand beside the musing Dane, to note
His thoughtful soul's deep strivings with itself ?
Think of the noble women thou hast known.
Upon whose lovely brows high grace reposed.

Within whose eyes the dew of tenderness
From love's unfathomable deep welled up—
Confirming faith in heaven; whose tones of truth
All affluent in hope, melodious breathed
More eloquent responses to the plea
For an immortal fate, than all the force
Proud reason ever marshalled to adorn
Doubt's desert plain with frigid argument.

Recall those moments whose concentrate span
Outvalues common years, when thou didst break
From thy poor thrall of dust, as if thou felt
The scope of an immortal flight were thine,
And rose through Love's celestial atmosphere,
Buoyant with gladness, to the gate of heaven!
Amid those blissful dreams, how paled afar
The star of glory, like an earthly lamp
At the first outbreak of the god of day!
Ah! then thou didst forswear most earnestly
Ambition's weary race; the thirst for gold
Died with disdain, as manhood's mind contemns
The toys of infancy; each selfish aim,
The sophistry of rank, pleasure's gay badge,
And all the means and purposes of life,
Dwindled to mocking trifles, as the waves
Of a new-born affection proudly swelled,
With a deep music and far-spreading sweep,
Before which all the sounds of earth grew faint,
And former prospects sunk to littleness.

Such are the mysteries that circle life!
To think—yet with unsatisfied desire,

Sit in the temple-porch of Knowledge still,
Forbidden by our clay habiliments
From rushing to the open arms of Truth,
To lay our aching brows upon her breast ;
To love—yet at affection's banquet glean
Mere crumbs of nourishment, while our strong hearts
Are shaping ever an ideal love,
And thirsting for a sympathy of soul
Which angels only know.

Yet thank the Giver of each perfect gift,
For the perception and the pledge divine ;
Treasure the better moments thou hast known,
When, with volcanic force, the light of thought
Shed a celestial splendor o'er the world ;
Or love, forgetful of its earthly fate,
Seemed momentarily to know the deathless joy
Awaiting it above ; a grateful hope
Shall thus the elements of time subdue,
And harmonize the soul with filial trust.

THE CATHEDRAL.

ROUND thy walls life's sea is beating,
Like an ever-restless tide,
But within, its waves retreating,
To a holy calm subside.

Sunbeams through thy windows slanting,
Scatter gold and crimson dyes,
Such as, autumn forests haunting,
Glow beneath my native skies.

Statues pale mute watch are keeping
Near the ashes of the bold,
Banners dim with age are sleeping
O'er the tombs so white and cold.

Here the lonely mourner, kneeling,
Feels Love's air upon his brow ;
Here, with awed and earnest feeling,
Maidens breathe the bridal vow.

Truth's sublime and cheerful dawning
From thy trophies ever smiles,
And a high and sweet forewarning
Whispers through thy dusky aisles.

Through thy arched recesses wending,
Prince and peasant wander free,
For thy gifts are all-befriending,—
Oft have they befriended me.

From gay crowds and sunny places
Unto thee I've fondly turned,
And amid thy solemn graces
Mused until the fire burned.

Here with peace my thoughts have blended,
As the desert wind with balm,
And my heart's vain strife has ended,
Soothed by thy exalted calm.

And since I must seek to-morrow
A far land beyond the sea,
Let me now fresh courage borrow,
As I oft have done from thee!

THE HERO OF LAKE ERIE.

ON a green knoll in yonder field of graves,
Where the rank grass o'er mound and tablet waves,
A granite shaft allures the vagrant eye
To where the ashes of a hero lie.
This briny air, in its perennial sweep,
Nerved his young frame to conquer on the deep ;
Around these shores, a boy, with sportive ease
He trimmed his shallop to the wayward breeze ;
A fearless athlete, in his summer play,
He clove the surf of this unrivalled bay ;
Trod the lone cliff where storm-lashed billows roll,
To see the rocks their baffled rage control,
Or watch their serried ranks majestic pour
A ceaseless tribute on his native shore ;
The snowy fringes on each leaping surge,
Like victors' wreaths, heroic purpose urge ;
In their wild roar the deadly charge he hears,
Feels in their spray a nation's grateful tears ;
The mellow sunsets, whose emblazoned crest
With purple radiance flushes all the west,
Like glory's banner, to his vision spread,
To guide the living, consecrate the dead !

His boyhood thus by winds and waves beguiled,
Here Nature cradled her intrepid child ;
Won his clear gaze to scan the horizon wall,
His heart with ocean's heart to rise and fall,

His ear to drink the music of the gale,
His pulse to leap with the careering sail,
His brow the landscape's open look to wear,
His eye to freshen in this crystal air ;
Braced by her rigors, melted by her smile,
She reared the hero of her peerless isle.

Then went he forth—not like a knight of old,
Armed at all points, with veterans enrolled,
But in the strength of a devoted will,
A martyr's patience and a patriot's skill :
No fleet was his whose guns and pennons bore
The tested might of conquests won of yore :
The trees whose shadow played o'er Erie's wave,
Were felled and launched—a rampart for the brave ;
The oak that stretched its leafy branches there,
And dallied lightly with the autumn air,
One morn, a sturdy bulwark of the free,
Floated the empress of that inland sea !
No gray survivors of the battle's wreck
Manned the rude ports of her unpolished deck ;
Destined to grapple with a practised foe,
The will to fight is all her champions know.

Sublime the pause when down the gleaming tide
The virgin galleys to the conflict glide ;
The very wind, as if in awe or grief,
Scarce wakes a ripple, or disturbs a leaf ;
The lighted brand, the piles of iron hail,
The boatswain's whistle and the fluttering sail,
The thick-strewn sand beneath their noiseless tread,

To drink the gallant blood as yet unshed,
The long-drawn breath, the glance of mutual cheer,
Eager with hope, oblivious of fear,
Valor's stern mood, affection's pensive sigh,
Alone declare relentless havoc nigh.
Behold the chieftain's glad, prophetic smile,
As a new banner he unrolls the while ;
Hear the gay shout of his elated crew
When the dear watchword hovers to their view,
And Lawrence, silent in the arms of death,
Bequeaths defiance with his latest breath.*

Why to one point turns every graceful prow ?
What scares the eagle from his lonely bough ?

A bugle note far through the welkin rings,
From ship to ship its airy challenge flings,
Then round each hull the murky war-clouds loom,
The lightnings glare, the sullen thunders boom ;
Peal follows peal, and with each lurid flash,
The tall masts shiver, and the bulwarks crash ;
The shrouds hang loose, the decks are wet with gore,
And dying shrieks resound along the shore ;
As fall the bleeding victims, one by one,
Their messmates rally to the smoking gun ;
As the maimed forms are sadly borne away
From the fierce carnage of that murderous fray,
A fitful joy lights up each drooping eye
To see the starry banner floating high ;

* Just before the action, a flag with the motto "Don't give up the ship !" was hoisted.

Or mark their unharmed leader's dauntless air
 (His life enfolded in his loved one's prayer;)*
 Pity and high resolve his bosom rend,
 "Not o'er my head shall that bright flag descend!"
 With brief monition from the hulk he springs,
 To a fresh deck his rapid transit wings,
 Back to the strife exultant shapes his way,
 Again to test the fortunes of the day.
 As bears the noble consort slowly down,
 Portentous now her teeming cannon frown;
 List to the volleys that incessant break
 The ancient silence of that border lake!
 As lifts the smoke, what tongue can fitly tell
 The transports which those manly bosoms swell,
 When Britain's ensign down the reeling mast
 Sinks, to proclaim the desperate struggle past!
 Electric cheers along the shattered fleet,
 With rapturous hail, her youthful hero greet;
 Meek in his triumph, as in danger calm,
 With reverent hand he takes the victor's palm;
 His wreath of conquest on Faith's altar lays,†
 To his brave comrades yields the meed of praise;
 With mercy's balm allays the captive's woe,
 And wrings oblation from his vanquished foe!

While Eric's currents lave her winding shore,
 Or down the crags a rushing torrent pour,
 While floats Columbia's standard to the breeze,
 No blight shall wither laurels such as these!

* Perry said, after his miraculous escape, that he owed his life to his wife's prayers.

† "It has pleased the Almighty to grant to the arms of the United States a signal victory," &c.—*Perry's Dispatch*.

CLEOPATRA'S PEARL.

How bravely plunged the diver low, upon his weary
quest,
And struggled long amid the waves, at royalty's behest !
The deep resigned its cherished gift, enchanting queen,
to thee,
And yielded Egypt's diadem the tribute of the sea !

Awhile it decked thy olive brow, or graced thine arm of
snow,
Or proudly fluttered on thy breast with the warm heart
below,
And then the pure and matchless gem, nursed by the
crystal brine,
Was in a golden vase dissolved, and quaffed with ruddy
wine.

As the heart's pledge that costly prize was wildly offered
up,
By Beauty's fond caprice decreed to melt in Pleasure's
cup ;
Ah, sweeter lips saluted thee than sea-shell's rosy curl,
No jewel of the deep is famed like Cleopatra's pearl !

Alas ! as rare a pearl—thy love, proud queen, as swiftly
flew
In Luxury's base goblet drained—too sparkling to be
true ;
While cold beneath a serpent's fangs thy bosom ceased
its strife,
And in Despair's dark chalice fled the jewel of thy life.

At the world's banquet, thus we pledge our dearest
 gems away,
And make the jewels of the soul anticipate decay—
Cherished awhile, then one by one swept off in Passion's
 whirl,
Or melted in the cup of Time, like Cleopatra's pearl!

THE FUNERAL OF CRAWFORD. .

December 5th, 1857.

THE tears that silent fall,
The ritual and the pall,
The dirge and crowd of mourners gathered round,
Declare a vanished breath,
The cold eclipse of death—
But Worth and Genius rend its narrow bound;

Their offspring cannot die,
And fondly hover nigh
To soothe the anguish they may not control;
What an undying race,
In forms of placid grace,
To Fancy's gaze reveal the Sculptor's soul!

A harp's low, quivering note
Above us seems to float
Like the faint murmur of a lover's sigh,
And a lithe shape to glide
Seeking the ravished bride,
As eager Orpheus moves expectant by!

And Liberty's appeal
 From lips of bronze to steal,
 As Eloquence uplifts persuasion's hand ;
 While near, transfixed in thought,
 From inward rapture caught,
 Music's high priest before us seems to stand.

With firm, exalted mien,
 In rectitude serene,
 Our Country's Father reins his martial steed ;
 And thronging to the rite,
 Looms on our aching sight,
 A vast procession from the quarry freed ;—

Pandora's queenly breast,
 And Cupid's loving zest,
 The Grecian hero and the Saxon child ;
 And death's angelic sleep
 Seems evermore to creep
 O'er the clasped infants lost amid the wild.

Hushed be the requiem's wail,
 As forms so mute and pale,
 Yet warmed to life by thy creative art,
 Haste, like pure spirits, here,
 To consecrate thy bier,
 And living still procain thy dauntless heart.

Beauty's immortal quest
 Sustained privation's test,
 Until youth's vision manhood's prize became ;

Then the delights of home,
And hallowed air of Rome,
Crowned thy unswerving prime with love and fame.

In Fortune's noon of might
Came the relentless blight,
And Life's best triumphs thou no more couldst share ;
Those hands that nobly wrought,
And truth enamored sought,
The chisel loosened then—to fold in prayer !

The Grief whose shadows rest
Here in thy native West,
An echo wakes in Art's perennial clime ;
Thy marble children wait,
In beauty desolate,
And brothers mourn thee in that haunt of Time !

The sunsets pensive flush,
The fountains moaning gush,
Campagna flowers sweeter incense breathe ;
Beneath the Palatine,
In studio and shrine,
Glory and Woe their palm and cypress wreath ;

With Art's eternal calm,
With Faith's all-healing balm,
And Love's unfading smile,—thy spirit fled ;
Ah, no ! by these we feel
Its presence o'er us steal,
Though kneeling tearful here beside the dead.

NEWPORT.

BETWEEN old gable roofs afar,
I watch the shadows on the bay,
When o'er it hangs the morning star
Or steals the waning glow of day.

Like sapphire gleams its crystal blue
Beneath the sky's unclouded dome,
While every breeze awakes to view
A thousand crests of pearly foam.

I watch the sail across it glide
And vanish like a wing in air,
Or, mirrored in the glassy tide,
The anchored craft sway idly there.

I see the fragrant zephyrs play
O'er clover bloom and twinkling grass,
Amid the poplar leaves delay,
That turn to silver as they pass.

Through clinging mists that, as a shroud,
Its mottled limbs float dimly o'er,
Like a huge spectre wrapt in cloud,
I watch the dying sycamore.

From Fancy's trance awakened soon,
I hear the ancient steeple's chime
Break on the golden hush of noon,
To summon back the thought of time.

But, when the level sunbeams fling
Their rosy flush along the deep,
And to the restless spirit bring
The vigil that it loves to keep ;

Then musing by the shore alone,
While near the shelving billows rise,
I list their dreamy monotone,
As, with each lapsing wave, it dies.

Or from yon green and craggy height,
Gaze forth upon the boundless sea,
That spreads beyond my eager sight,
The emblem of infinity.

THE SIEGE OF ROME.

1849.

THE mellow sunsets that with rapture fill
Claude's young disciples on the Pincian hill,*
No more are watched with meditative gaze,
As melts their gold in twilight's purple haze ;
Drowned is the pine's low whisper by the roar
Artillery peals like billows on the shore,
And the soft chorus of the serenade
Yields to the cheer that mans the barricade ;
The moon's benignant ray, that sweetly fell
On trellised vine and friar's quiet cell,
Reveals dead heroes, whose cold faces still

* Claude lived on Monte Pincio, and his house is still a favorite residence of students of Art in Rome.

Wear the stern smile that proves unconquered will ;
The lofty cypresses on Mario's height,
Like conscious mourners, greet the aching sight,
For bayonets gleam from bulwarks heaped below,
And in their shadow bivouac the foe.
No organ's tone and nun's sweet voice beguile
The musing stranger in Saint Peter's aisle,
But its vast concave echoes back the sound
Of booming cannon from the plains around—
Those hallowed plains, whose solitude the eye
Of wandering artist melted to desery ;
Where fragmentary arch and brooding cloud
Forbid each tongue profane to breathe aloud ;
Where, if a passing footfall hovered nigh,
The frightened lizard swiftly glided by ;
Where Nature's bounty, in that fertile clime,
Paused, as if awe-struck at the wrecks of Time,
And spread for ruthless man a neutral ground,
With solemn hills and holy silence round,
To check, with thought, the warrior's cruel zeal,
And bid him Life's departed spirit feel.
Vain lesson for that sacrilegious race,
For whom the earth contains no sacred place ;
Who, in their reckless hour, with fiendish care
Torture a woman, and a marble spare ;*
With "Free Republic" on their banner wrought,
Crusade against her, though with valor bought ;
Rome's peaceful haunts and venerable air

* In the French Revolution, the same monsters who insulted with every conceivable degradation the imprisoned Queen, were scrupulous to preserve the statues in the Tuilleries from the violence of the mob.

Make waste and lurid with the battle's glare ;
 Through Faith's own temple speed the crushing ball,
 And shroud Art's trophies with Destruction's pall.

Chivalric French ! the murderous bomb to hurl
 And wound a child, or kill a sleeping girl,*
 Shake the lone painter's easel, till no more
 His eager hand the canvas may explore ;
 Make drear the villa's paths of odorous gloom,
 Where ilex twines and oleanders bloom ;
 Bid your brave rifles from their massive screen
 Shoot patriots down the instant they are seen,
 And your base leader to his master send
 The mocking lie that Romans call him friend !

The Summer harvests all neglected wave,
 While peasants throng their country's name to save ;
 Nor thunder-bolt nor hot sirocco's breath†
 Can keep those reapers from the field of death ;
 Pale students haste their gentle lives to sell,
 And dark-eyed women quench the burning shell,‡
 While Lombards, exiled from their native plain,
 Here wield the sword for Liberty again !

Ah not alone the Dawn's ærial grace,
 Bequeathed by Art's apostle to his race,§

* A letter from Mr. Freeman, the painter, which appeared in the *Evening Post*, mentions that a beautiful young Travertina was killed by a shell while in bed.

† The same letter mentions the prevalence of thunder-storms and Sirocco winds during the siege.

‡ The Roman women extinguished many of the bombs as they fell. (See Madame Ossoli's letters.)

§ Guido's *Aurora* was much injured.

But the first rosy beams of Freedom's morn
By the invader's battle-smoke were shorn !

When the guerilla troop* in bright array
Took through the gate their melancholy way ;
When the triumvir, fearless, calm, and proud,
Resigned his trust to that despairing crowd,
And over breastworks youthful corpses made,
The modern Goths their tarnished flag displayed ;
When through the breach in Rome's once sacred wall,
Filed the battalions of the perjured Gaul ;
Oh, why did no celestial sign appear,
Like that which beamed when Constantine was near ?
No sainted hero or immortal bard
By Heaven armed, that sacrifice retard ?

And when achieved, how like a funeral knell
Through outraged Rome indignant silence fell !
Deserted balconies and streets forlorn
O'erwhelmed the captors with a voiceless scorn ;
From that vain triumph Beauty's pleading eyes
Were turned, in anguish, to the tranquil skies ;
That sudden hush to each invader's ear,
Murmured reproaches that he quailed to hear ;
They stole from every house that lined the way,
Whose darkened casements hid the light of day ;†
From Tasso's convent, Raphael's burning home,‡
The shattered cornice and the riven dome,

* Garibaldi's corps.

† The casements were shut when the French entered.

‡ Raphael's house was consumed in self-defence by the besieged.

